
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 November 2016

by Daniel Hartley BA Hons MTP MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 21 November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/W/16/3155091

The Pippins, 248 Preston Road, Longridge, Lancashire PR3 3BD

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr David Bolton against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2016/0195, dated 14 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 6 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is an application for outline planning permission for one detached dwelling with integral garage and a new detached garage to the front of the existing property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. It is not clear whether the outline planning application form includes a request to consider appearance as well as access details. However, the Council's officer report states that the application was made in outline with access and in the appellant's appeal statement he states that this is correct. I have therefore determined this appeal on the basis of being an outline proposal with access. Indicative layout details accompany the planning application, as well as a "planning, design and access statement". I have had regard to this information as part of the determination of this appeal, but recognise that as layout and appearance details are not being applied for it is necessary for me to consider the principle of development on all parts of the appeal site.
3. I have used the description of development from the Council's refusal notice and not from the planning application form. This is because it more accurately describes the appeal proposal in the context of the address of the appeal site.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether or not the proposal would constitute a sustainable form of development having regard to policies in the adopted Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008-2028 "A Local Plan for Ribble Valley" 2014 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Reasons

Site and proposal

5. The appeal site comprises part of a rear and front garden associated with a detached bungalow (The Pippins, 248 Preston Road). The rear garden can be reached from an existing access drive to the side of The Pippins. The site falls within land defined as countryside in the adopted Ribble Valley Borough Council Core Strategy 2008-2028 "A Local Plan for Ribble Valley" 2014 CS) and is about half a mile from the defined edge of the settlement known as Longridge. In the immediate area the properties are mainly residential, although there are some commercial properties including a restaurant.
6. It is proposed to erect a detached dwelling with integral garage in part of the rear garden of The Pippins. Whilst scale and appearance would be considered at reserved matter stage, the appellant's planning, design and access statement indicates that the dwelling would have a similar appearance to the two storey and stone built detached dwelling at No 250 Preston Road: the indicative plans suggest that the property would be approximately 7.5 metres high. The drive to west of The Pippins would be shared between the host dwelling and the appeal property. Immediately fronting Preston Road, and within the front garden area of The Pippins, it is proposed to erect a garage. The indicative plan suggests that this would be about 4.8 metres high.

Sustainability – proposed garage

7. The indicative plan shows that the proposed garage would be positioned to the front of The Pippins and would be forward of the building line of the dwellings on this part of Preston Road. On my site visit, I was able to see that there was already a wooden building (this looked like a garage) and a concrete pillar box in the front garden set immediately behind existing trees/vegetation which front Preston Road. Given the existing vegetation, and the scale of the buildings, they are not prominent or conspicuous in the street-scene.
8. Given the existing development in the front garden of the host dwelling, it may be possible to erect a small garage in this area without it causing harm to the character and appearance of the area. However, I am not certain whether the appellant is proposing to demolish the two existing buildings. This is not included in the description of development and the application is made in outline with layout and appearance details reserved for a subsequent reserved matters application. The location plan includes a large red edge and so I need to consider the potential for erecting a garage in any part of it. I consider that the possible retention of the existing buildings, coupled with the erection of a garage, would likely cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. Part of the front garden is visible during the autumn/winter months from Preston Road (as vegetation is deciduous), and the erection of a number of buildings/structures in this area would likely have a dominating impact and appear incongruous within its setting.
9. Whilst it may be possible to erect a garage which would be similar in scale and location to the existing wooden building / concrete pillar box, I would need more information from the appellant about whether or not the existing buildings would be demolished to make way for such development. In some respects, this is the sort of outline application where it would be necessary, at

this stage, to apply for specific detailed matters such layout and scale. Furthermore, the existing buildings, which are close to the highway and forward of the host dwelling building line, are only acceptable because of the screening effect of the trees/vegetation. I do not have enough information from the appellant to establish whether or not a garage could be erected in a similar position without it causing harm to the existing vegetation. I therefore do not consider that I have enough information to determine whether or not a garage in the front garden would be acceptable in land use principle terms.

10. Notwithstanding the above, I am mindful that the appellant has submitted only indicative plans and that layout details would be considered at reserved matters stage. The red edged planning application site includes the rear garden area of The Pippins as well as the front garden. It may, in principle, be possible to erect a very small garage immediately to the rear / side of The Pippins, but I do not have any indicative or detailed information (for example scale / layout details) before me to allow me to assess such a proposal fully.
11. For above reasons, I conclude that I have insufficient information relating to whether or not the erection of a garage to the front (or rear) of The Pippins would, in principle, cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, the proposal would not accord with the design aims of Policies DMG1 and DMG2 of the CS. As this aspect of the proposal would therefore be unacceptable in environmental terms, it would not therefore amount to a sustainable form of development having regard to paragraph 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Sustainability – proposed dwelling

12. The appeal site falls within land defined as countryside in the CS. It is about half a mile from the edge of the defined settlement of Longridge. Key Statement DS1 of the CS states that the majority of new housing development will be concentrated within a strategic site to the south of Clitheroe towards the A59 and "*the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley*". Key Statement DS1 of the CS then states that development will then be focussed in the defined Tier 1 villages. In respect of the defined Tier 2 villages (which are less sustainable) development will need to meet proven local needs or deliver regeneration benefits. The appeal site does not fall with any of the defined principal settlements or defined villages. Consequently, the proposal does not accord with the development strategy for the Borough as outlined in Key Statement DS1 of the CS. This weighs against allowing the proposal.
13. As the site falls within land defined as countryside, the appeal should also be considered against Policy DMH3 of the CS. This policy permits a number of developments in the countryside including residential conversions, residential development which meets an identified local need or the re-building / replacement of an existing dwelling. The proposal is not for a local need and does not fall within any of the permitted development categories in Policy DMH3 of the CS. This also weighs against allowing the proposal.
14. Notwithstanding the above identified conflicts with policy, Key Statement DS2 states that "*when considering development proposals the Council will take a positive approach that reflects the presumption in favour of development contained within the National Planning Policy Framework*". Therefore, and in order to consider sustainability issues in the round, consideration must also be

given to all three mutually dependent dimensions of sustainability in paragraph 7 of the Framework; namely the economic, social and environmental roles.

15. In respect of environmental sustainability, the proposed dwelling would be located about half a mile from the edge of Longridge. I don't doubt that a number of journeys would be undertaken using the private motor vehicle. However, a number of day to day facilities and services could be reached on foot with relative ease. There are footpaths on Preston Road which are relatively wide and lit and connect the appeal site to the principal settlement of Longridge. Consequently, I do not share the Council's view that the appeal site would be inaccessible to services and facilities, or that the proposal would lead to significant reliance on the private motor vehicle. This weighs in favour of the proposal.
16. However, and notwithstanding the above, I do consider that the erection of a dwelling in this countryside location would lead to environmental harm in terms of its adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the countryside. The development along Preston Road is essentially linear in form and the land to the rear (including gardens) is more open and green. A number of the dwellings along this part of Preston Road have large gardens stretching some way to the field boundary. The erection of a dwelling in the rear garden of The Pippins would detract from the aforementioned distinctive character to an unacceptable degree. Paragraph 17 of the Framework says that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The erection of a dwelling would lead to encroachment into the countryside. In this case, I consider that the erosion of the character and appearance of this part of the countryside would be significant.
17. I accept that this is an outline proposal and that the erection of a dwelling to the rear of The Pippins is indicative. However, the erection of a dwelling in the front garden of The Pippins would appear materially out of place in the street-scene, and I doubt that such a dwelling could be erected in such a position without harm being caused to the living conditions of the occupiers of The Pippins.
18. In addition to the above, the erection of a dwelling in this location would run counter to Policy DMG2 of the CS which states that "*development proposals in the principal settlements of Clitheroe, Longridge and Whalley and the Tier 1 villages should consolidate, expand or round off development so that it is closely related to the main built up areas, ensuring that this is appropriate to the scale of, and in-keeping with, the existing settlement*". The proposed dwelling would not be closely related to Longridge and given the distance of the site from the defined settlement boundary, it could not reasonably be argued that it would relate to a consolidation, expansion or rounding off.
19. In economic terms, the occupiers of the dwelling would spend some money in the local area, but the contribution from the occupiers of one dwelling would be limited. The construction of a house would provide some construction employment, although this would be relatively short lived. I do not have any information about the Council's five year land supply position. However, and notwithstanding such a position, the contribution of one dwelling to the supply of housing sites would be very limited.
20. I have considered the proposal against paragraph 55 of the Framework. Whilst the proposed dwelling would not be particularly remote from day to day

services and facilities, I do not consider that a dwelling on the appeal site would reflect the pattern and position of development along Preston Road. In essence the proposed dwelling would appear out of place and isolated from the more linear pattern of development along Preston Road. Furthermore, I do not consider that one dwelling in this location would make a significant contribution towards enhancing or maintaining the vitality of rural communities. I therefore conclude that the proposal would lead to the erection of an isolated dwelling in the countryside and that it would not meet any of the identified special circumstances outlined in Paragraph 55.

21. In conclusion, the proposed dwelling would be located in the countryside and would not accord with the development strategy for the Borough, as outlined in the CS. Whilst the site would not be particularly remote from day to day services and facilities in terms of walking (and hence I consider that the proposal accords with the transport aims of Policy DMG3 of the CS), in principle significant harm would be caused to the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside as a result of erection of a dwelling on the appeal site. Whilst the erection of a dwelling would deliver some social and economic benefits, these would be limited and to some extent short lived. On balance, the identified environmental harm to the character and appearance of the countryside, and conflict with the Council's development strategy for the Borough, are overriding concerns. I therefore conclude that the proposed dwelling would not amount to a sustainable form of development and would not accord with Key Statements DS1, DS2 and Policies DMG2 and DMH3 of the CS and the Framework.

Other Matters

22. I have taken into account the fact the appellant would like a new home from an "upsizing" point of view and that the existing property would be occupied by his mother who would like to "downsize". I also recognise that as the appellant owns the land, it is likely that it would be more cost effective to build a new home on this site rather than buying an existing property elsewhere in the locality. However, these are not matters which are of sufficient weight to override my conclusions reached on the main issue.
23. I have considered the appellants reference to planning applications for other dwellings in the countryside which have been considered by the Council. However, I have no reason to doubt what the Council says about these developments being approved prior to the adoption of the CS (and one was refused). Furthermore, and, in any event, I have determined this appeal on its individual planning merits.
24. I have considered the Council's third reason for refusal that relates to the creation of a precedent should the appeal be allowed. I have considered this appeal on its individual planning merits and, in any event, as I have concluded that the appeal should be dismissed it has not been necessary for me to consider this matter any further.

Conclusions

25. For the reasons outlined above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that in principle the proposal would not deliver sustainable development. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

Daniel Hartley

INSPECTOR